

Chapter 5: Vo-Tech and External Degree Programs

Resource *DANTES External Degree Catalog*, and *DANTES Catalog of Nationally Accredited Distance Learning Programs*. Order these catalogs from DANTES using the DANTES Material Request Form (DANTES 1561/5). The Catalogs are also online at <http://www.dantescatalogs.com/CounselorDisclaimer.asp>. See the chapter on DANTES for additional information.

Overview The DANTES Distance Learning Program provides a wide range of nontraditional education programs critical for Service members who need alternatives to fulfill degree requirements when classroom courses are unavailable or when work schedules or duty locations do not permit class attendance.

What kinds of programs are available?

DANTES External Degree Program	Certificate, Associates, Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral Programs
Vocational & technical courses and degree programs offered by nationally accredited institutions	Diploma, Certificate, Associates, Bachelors, Masters Programs

Benefits Study when the schedule permits.

Choose from various levels:

undergraduate through graduate school, including doctorate,

vocational or

technical

Increase promotion and pay potential.

Receive tuition assistance.

Purpose The *DANTES External Degree Catalog* lists programs available from about 112 accredited colleges and universities that have little or no residency requirement for degree completion, making them very useful to service members in achieving their educational goals. The guide lists approximately 205 associate, 341 baccalaureate, 486 graduate degree and about 310 credit-bearing certificate programs.

The *DANTES Catalog of Nationally Accredited Distance Learning Programs* contains course listings from more than 42 schools accredited by the various national accrediting bodies. The nationally accredited program provides a means of independent study for service members who want to develop skills through technical and non-technical training or complete a variety of degree programs from Associates through Doctorate.

Vo-Tech and External Degree Programs (continued)

Courses Delivery

Affiliated schools use an array of low- to high-tech delivery choices aimed at individual students, worldwide. Although textbooks, pen and paper continue to be a standard of distance learning, advances in technology allow a variety of fast and efficient delivery systems. Many schools encourage the use of E-mail to submit and receive course lessons and papers or to communicate directly with instructors or admission offices. In these classes, assignments can go directly from the student's computer to the instructor's in seconds. Others rely on computers for class interaction among students. Many use the Internet to deliver instruction on line, and several rely on satellite or cable delivery methods. Usually, schools allow nine to 12 months to complete the course.

Enrollment

Students may discuss goals with education counselors and the courses needed to meet those goals. Consult the catalogs described above, as well as specific distance learning catalogs from individual schools.

1. Verify that the course selected will meet personal needs and will be accepted toward desired degrees.
 2. Complete the school's enrollment form. Most of the schools have on-line enrollment. The URL is listed in the institutional pages of the catalog. USCG does not use the DANTES enrollment process and form. Additionally, all schools have open enrollment so students can enroll when desired without waiting for the term to start.
 3. The school will send books and lesson materials to the student.
 4. When students complete the final lesson, the school will send a grade report to the student.
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Tuition Assistance (TA)

Since most distance learning courses allow the student several months to complete the course, tuition assistance will be paid when the student successfully completes the course. When the course is completed eligible USCG members shall submit the following documents to the CGI to claim reimbursement:

1. USCG Form 4147, "Application for Off-Duty Assistance"
2. Receipt showing dollars paid
3. Extract from the catalog showing tuition charges and a copy of the grade report

When the institution's catalog lists that the course must be completed in 18 weeks or less, tuition assistance may be provided at the time of course enrollment. In these rare situations, the documents listed below shall be submitted to the CGI.

1. [USCG Form 4147](#), "Application for Off-Duty Assistance"
2. Documentation from the institution confirming that the course must be completed within the 18-week window.
3. When the TA is approved, a "TA Authorization Form" will be issued to the student. This form should accompany the enrollment package to the institution

For additional information on applying for TA, please see the Tuition Assistance Instruction (COMDTINST M1500.24).

Vo-Tech and External Degree Programs (continued)

Fees and Services

Costs vary for each course and institution. Fee information is found in the institutional information page within each of the three catalogs. Customer service from the participating schools have agreed to the following:

- Provide rapid turnaround time for initial ordering and distribution of course materials and for grading lessons and examinations.
 - Provide transcript services to the Military student in accordance with policies set forth in the school's catalog.
 - Students may enroll whenever desired.
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Tips for Success with External Degree Programs

1. Develop a plan for completing the course and put that plan on paper. Set aside specific hours for study.
 2. Work in an atmosphere that allows you to study effectively.
 3. Include milestones to be reached by a specific time.
 4. Check progress periodically; build the checkpoints into the plan.
 5. Check the plan against the course outline and study guide provided by the school. Ensure the plan is realistic when compared to work scheduled and other obligations.
 6. Submit the first lesson as soon as possible.
 7. Review all graded/returned lessons in the first part of your study session and review text materials to ensure an understanding of the concepts presented in past chapters.
 8. Discuss what you learned with someone else. Discussing new information enhances learning.
 9. Try to enroll in the same course with two or three friends. Form a study team and meet as often as possible, at least twice a week.
 10. Find someone with knowledge in the subject area; use that person as a resource to talk with about the course.
 11. Make contact with your instructors. Let them know of special problems or questions you have as early as possible.
 12. Complete lessons and examinations as required by the school. Ensure all work is clearly written.
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End of Chapter